



TAFEDirectors

AUSTRALIA

Election Manifesto 2010

Six Policy Plans for Political Parties and Candidates

About TAFE Directors Australia

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) is the peak national body representing Australia's 59 public TAFE Institutes and university TAFE divisions, and the Australia-Pacific Technical College (APTC).

Australia's TAFE Institute network is the largest and most diverse tertiary education sector in Australia, with more than 1300 locations across CBDs, suburban, regional and remote locations. Many Institutes offer further services through the Asia-Pacific and other offshore regions. The core business of TDA is to support its member Institutes and advocate for quality skills in Australia.

Policy proposals

In response to the 2010 Federal Election, TDA has brought together the key opportunities and challenges facing its members, as outlined in six policy measures in this Manifesto.

These are tangible and achievable measures that can be adopted by both sides of politics to advance Australia's training and economic productivity delivered by the largest public provider of vocational education and training – the TAFE Institute network.

These measures can have an enormous flow-on effect. Boosting training and skills capacity supports industry requiring leading-edge technology training, creates high quality resources and improved infrastructure, and high-quality courses and teaching which reach to the thousands of students that attend TAFE Institutes, with enhanced education opportunities. The measures will also help to support the wider economic and social environment by boosting the capability of the sector to meet specific industry needs and supporting one of Australia's biggest exports, international education.

The six policy components of the TDA Election Manifesto include:

- > A connected tertiary education sector
- > Funding to overcome skills shortages and a dedicated Structural Adjustment Fund for TAFE Institutes
- > A simpler and more effective quality assurance regulatory system
- > The engagement of young people in vocational skills
- > A special focus on the resources sector
- > A revitalised international student market

Proposal

Rationale

Components

A connected tertiary education sector

TAFE Institutes already operate on the tertiary boundary by offering diplomas and advanced diplomas, and a small but growing number offer bachelor degrees with an applied focus.

There are increasing opportunities for TAFE Institutes – independently and in collaboration with universities – to provide individuals and enterprises with enhanced tertiary options.

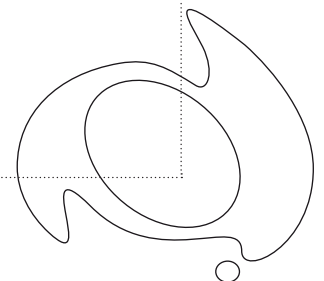
TAFE Institutes are adjusting their existing teaching programs to accommodate demand across occupations for new specialist skills and skills sets at diploma level and above.

The dynamics of TAFE Institutes were not well acknowledged in the Bradley Review of Higher Education Final Report 2008.

TDA argues that priority for Commonwealth Supported Places funding to TAFE be given in areas of occupational and skill needs.

TDA contends that a connected tertiary education sector would include:

- Recognition that tertiary education qualifications are those at the diploma level and above. This would include qualifications that embed pathways from the qualification level below and above.
- Recognition that tertiary education institutions are those which have a broad educational mission and the capacity and capability to deliver a range of tertiary education qualifications.
- The creation of a set of more unified tertiary education protocols.
- A student-centred policy and regulatory framework which moves away from a 'one size fits all' approach. This approach would implement more timely and appropriate risk-orientated monitoring and audit procedures and processes.
- The expansion of a student demand-driven funding system through a staged extension of eligibility for student-based funding.
- Giving non-university providers including TAFE Institutes access to Commonwealth Supported Places funding in higher education (HE) fields. This should be initially focused on areas of skills shortages identified in the Skilled Occupation List.
- Consistent data collection for vocational education and training (VET) and HE.



Proposal

Rationale

Components

Funding to overcome skills shortages and a dedicated Structural Adjustment Fund for TAFE Institutes

TDA supports the Australian Industry Group's advocacy for \$660 million per annum in increased funding to accommodate a targeted 3% annual growth in VET participation.

This funding increase would deliver certainty for industry following expert surveys (by Deloitte, and Randstad) showing Australian firms across many sectors reported a tightening labour market and difficulty in recruiting skilled staff.

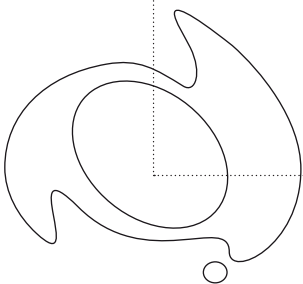
A dedicated Structural Adjustment Fund would enable TAFE to partner with both universities and enterprises, and strengthen TAFE's contribution to participation and skills development. It would provide more innovative and productive VET specialist programs (Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas and Vocational Graduate Certificates and Diplomas) which would assist in transitioning TAFE Institutes into the tertiary education sector.

Australia's top 100 VET providers deliver 90% of Australia's public training courses. Industry advocates, including Ai Group, have identified that an annual increase in VET funding of \$660M p.a. for five years, would satisfy needs of increasing by 3% annual growth in VET participation.

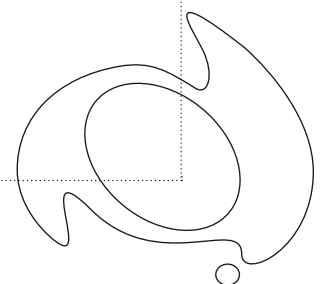
The Productivity Commission has found that extending workforce participation is one of the most effective tools to increase Australia's productivity. The support of a real increase of \$660M p.a., is a key measure needed for the period 2010–15.

TDA maintains that a dedicated VET Structural Adjustment Fund would support new growth requirements on TAFE Institutes:

- Infrastructure for specialist skills programs.
- The development of new educational programs such as pathways or foundation degrees, and development of high quality learning and support resources.
- The enhancement of teaching capability and pedagogy to meet the specific requirements of industry sectors, and in the case of diplomas and higher qualifications, reflect the tertiary discipline and body of knowledge.
- The development of new operational, administrative and workforce development systems necessary to meet the growing complexity of TAFE operations.
- Enhanced productivity from partnerships between TAFE Institutes, Regional Development Australia, and possibly, local government community bodies and job employment agencies.
- Rural and regional TAFE Institutes operating in 'thin' markets to enhance their capacity to operate using the national telecommunications network.



Proposal	Rationale	Components
<p>A simpler and more effective quality assurance regulatory system</p>	<p>TDA maintains that current legislation and regulation fail to provide timely and appropriate risk-orientated monitoring and audit procedures and processes.</p> <p>TDA maintains that, in this regard, legislators and regulators have failed to take the appropriate action to address these shortfalls.</p> <p>The overwhelming evidence for TDA's concerns is in the failure of the regulators and regulations to assure quality provision in the international student market which might have averted the reputational damage that has been incurred recently by the Australian VET sector.</p>	<p>TDA envisages that a simpler and more effective quality assurance and regulatory system would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward high performing, low-risk providers with less onerous regulation, using a risk management approach developed in consultation with TAFE Institutes. • Have rigorous registration and public identification of providers who do not meet high-performing targets, including tougher consumer protection requirements. • Identify benchmarks for high-performing TAFE Institutes. • Have appropriate metrics for measuring student completions. • Endorse TAFE Institutes as the 'safety net' for displaced students and absorb the additional costs involved. • Implement the Baird Review proposal for the replacement of current consumer protection arrangements for the private sector with a TAFE Institute-managed consumer protection arrangement (funded by private providers). • Have an effective, well-resourced, single national regulator with a focus on standards and continuous improvement across both VET and HE sectors.



Proposal

Rationale

Components

The engagement of young people in vocational skills

In recent years there has been a growth in the number of young people undertaking VET-in-Schools. In 2008, a total of 41% of students participated in VET as part of the senior secondary school certificate (NCVER).

Also in that year, there were 25 700 school-based apprentices and trainees, representing 11.7% of all VET-in-Schools students.

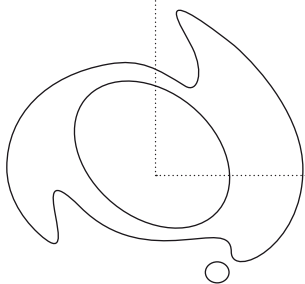
TDA argues that the role of these programs should not simply be to provide a study stream for those not planning to pursue higher education, but "to provide a quality pathway to employment or further education" (Lamb et al 2004).

TDA argues that in the first instance there is a lack of data about the outcomes to employment and education of these students, and in addition, the current policy and funding framework is not conducive to achievement of these outcomes.

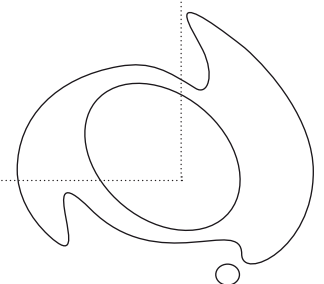
There is also an urgent need to expand the models of apprenticeship training.

TDA affirms that an effective engagement of young people in vocational skills would require:

- TAFE Institutes with industry-appropriate facilities and teaching/assessment expertise to be utilised and appropriately funded to cater for the vocational skills development of young people.
- The concept of trade centres in schools to be reviewed.
- The adoption of new models of apprenticeships that are institutionally based (although requiring work experience), but do not require employer contracts.
- The promotion of career pathways for tradespersons along the lines of an apprenticeship, journeyman, master tradesperson or articulation into degrees.
- Strengthened credit transfer arrangements from skills development programs to higher level programs including degrees.
- The development of more client-focused student support services to link students with jobs.
- A strengthened nexus between TAFE Institutes and Job Service agencies.



Proposal	Rationale	Components
<p>A special focus on the resources sector</p>	<p>TDA welcomed the paper 'Resourcing the Future', published by the National Resources Sector Employment Taskforce (NRSET 2010) which drew specific attention to the role of education and training in meeting industry skills needs.</p> <p>Too often, when the skills needs of an industry or group of industries in Australia are considered, the actual and potential contributions of the education and training sector are not canvassed adequately.</p> <p>The NRSET paper acknowledged the major role of education and training.</p> <p>While TDA acknowledges that skills training needs are complex and influenced by factors specific to an industry, the processes to identify those needs can also be seen as a prism for other industries.</p>	<p>TDA contends that a special focus on the Resources Sector would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable TAFE Institutes to lead trials across the resources sector of alternative apprenticeship pathways, as recommended in the final report of NRSET. • Enable TAFE Institutes to collaborate with Group Training companies to facilitate alternative apprenticeship trials. • Promote online programs for regional students in the resources industry, using the assets and skills of metropolitan TAFE Institute providers. • Develop appropriate facilities and teaching and learning resources to support high quality delivery and assessment which could be used as a model for other industries. • Introduce industry/government funded 'cadetships' for two-year apprenticeships undertaken in TAFE Institutes, with a cadet wage attached to the program. This proposal could also be related to 'youth at risk' concerns.



Proposal

Rationale

Components

A revitalised international student market

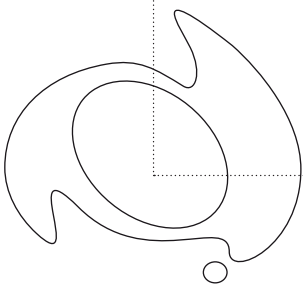
While there has been a significant increase in the number of Australian vocational education and training providers delivering training to international students both offshore and in Australia, there have been very public failures in the area – the closure of private colleges, incidents of students receiving poor quality training, and violence against students.

TAFE Institutes are seriously and negatively affected by the consequent damage to Australia's international reputation.

This damage has been brought about by the failure of the Australian regulatory framework and regulators to adequately govern the system, together with the resulting confusion caused by ad hoc government policy responses.

TDA asserts that a revitalised international student market would need:

- A regulatory system that differentiates between low-risk public providers and high-risk commercial providers in its regulations and auditing regime.
- Protection for consumers by providing a risk rating of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) operating in the international student market and this risk rating made public in a range of languages.
- State Migrations Plans (SMP) that meet the skills shortages of states and territories, allowing appropriately qualified international students to apply for visas, based on the identified skill shortage needs in SMP.
- A review of the employer-sponsored visa process to ensure potential sponsors can easily apply to meet skills shortages.
- Public providers to be represented at all forums where decisions are made about the placement of international students who are displaced by the failure of providers.
- Provision of a range of scholarships for short-term vocational education and training exchange in the Asia-Pacific region.
- A government-sponsored international education campaign to be mounted to counteract the damage done to the Australian education industry.
- Trade missions to strengthen Australia's relations with current and potential countries for Australia's international student market.



National Secretariat

Sydney Institute of TAFE NSW
Turner Hall (Building B) – Ultimo College
Cnr Mary Ann and Harris Streets
Ultimo NSW 2007

Our Postal Address

TAFE Directors Australia
National Secretariat
Sydney Institute of TAFE NSW
Ultimo College
PO Box 707 Broadway NSW 2007

Telephone: 02 9217 3180
Facsimile: 02 9281 7335
Email: memberservices@tda.edu.au

Website: www.tda.edu.au

